

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07  
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15  
USIA-06 EUR-12 AID-05 AGRE-00 DHA-05 EB-08 COME-00  
TRSE-00 DLOS-09 OES-07 NEA-10 EA-10 IO-13 INT-05  
MCT-01 IGA-02 /144 W  
-----003144 080006Z /14

R 070934Z OCT 77  
FM AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7039  
INFO AMEMBASSY VICTORIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 PORT LOUIS 1068

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINT PGOV PDIP ELAB ECON SE SF UR KS JA FR UK US MP  
SUBJECT: MAURITIUS WEEKLY REVIEW - OCTOBER 7

REF: PORT LOUIS 1042

SUMMARY: PORT LOUIS 1067 PROVIDES A SUMMARY OF THIS  
CABLE. END SUMMARY.

1. PRIME MINISTER RAMGOOLAM RETURNED TO MAURITIUS OCTOBER 1  
FROM TRAVELS WHICH TOOK HIM TO EUROPE (FRANCE, U.K.,  
DENMARK) AND THE U.S. INTERVIEWED BY THE PRESS UPON HIS  
ARRIVAL, RAMGOOLAM GAVE A BRIEF REVIEW OF THE VARIOUS  
TALKS HE HAD CONDUCTED WITH FOREIGN LEADERS. HE EXPRESSED  
PLEASURE THAT PRESIDENT GISCARD D'ESTAING HAD AGREED TO  
REGULARIZE THE STATUS OF 1,500 MAURITIANS IN FRANCE WHO  
HAD "NO PAPERS." HE WAS EQUALLY PLEASED BY TALKS WITH  
FOREIGN SECRETARY OWEN IN LONDON (OVER RHODESIA AND  
DIEGO GARCIA) AND WITH VICE PRESIDENT MONDALE IN WASHINGTON.  
HE SAID HE HAD REQUESTED WASHINGTON TO CONSIDER PROVIDING  
ECONOMIC AID TO MAURITIUS, SINCE BILATERAL AID FROM THE  
U.S. TO MAURITIUS IS CURRENTLY VIRTUALLY NON-EXISTENT.  
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HE REPORTED THAT HE ALSO DISCUSSED THE POSSIBILITY OF  
PURCHASE BY THE U.S. OF A LARGER PORTION OF MAURITIAN  
SUGAR ANNUALLY.

2. THE PRIME MINISTER BECAME HIGHLY ANNOYED WITH ONE  
REPORTER WHO ASKED HIM TO EXPLAIN HIS STATEMENT ON  
RHODESIA'S IAN SMITH MADE THREE WEEKS EARLIER IN PARIS.

RAMGOOLAM EXCLAIMED: "IF YOU WERE IN HIS SHOES, WOULD YOU GET OUT? SMITH MUST BE PROVIDED AN EXIT WHICH IS DIGNIFIED AND WORTHWHILE. YOU JUST CAN'T KICK HIM OUT." COMMENT: RAMGOOLAM'S OUTBURST WAS SO FORCEFUL AND EMOTIONAL THAT IT STUNNED THE PRESS CORPS INTO AN EMBARRASSED SILENCE, AND EFFECTIVELY ENDED THE CONFERENCE. END COMMENT.

3. CARRYING EXCERPTS FROM THE "JOURNAL DE L'ILE DE LA REUNION," LE MAURICIEN A FEW DAYS LATER PRINTED A FRONT PAGE ARTICLE WHICH QUOTED PRIME MINISTER RAMGOOLAM AS SAYING THE REFERENDUM ON WHETHER MAURITIUS SHOULD BECOME A REPUBLIC WOULD BE HELD IN NOVEMBER. THE PRIME MINISTER WAS ALSO QUOTED AS DECLARING THAT HE WOULD GIVE THE EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTRY PORTFOLIO TO MAURITIAN SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PMSD) LEADER GAETAN DUVAL IF THE LATTER SHOULD BE ELECTED TO PARLIAMENT IN A BY-ELECTION. RAMGOOLAM SUPPOSEDLY MADE THE REMARKS DURING HIS BRIEF STOPOVER IN REUNION ON OCTOBER 1.

4. GAETAN DUVAL ALSO RETURNED TO MAURITIUS OCTOBER 1 FROM A TRIP THAT TOOK HIM TO INDIA AND KENYA. HE STATED THAT, CONTRARY TO RUMORS, HE WOULD NOT EXERT PRESSURE TO REINSTITUTE PARLIAMENTARY BY-ELECTIONS BECAUSE HE BELIEVED THEY WOULD CREATE AN UNSTABLE POLITICAL SITUATION. DUBAL ADMITTED, HOWEVER, THAT SHOULD BY-ELECTIONS BE REINSTATED, HE MIGHT STAND FOR ELECTION TO FILL A  
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VACANCY. HE ALSO SCOTCHED RUMORS THAT HE PLANNED TO MARRY AN INDIAN PRINCESS.

5. "PILLAGING" OF MAURITIAN FISHERIES BY FOREIGN VESSELS CONTINUES TO BE ONE OF THE DOMINANT TOPICS OF THE DAY, PREOCCUPYING THE PRESS, THE PUBLIC, AND THE GOVERNMENT. LE MAURICIEN NEWSPAPER REPORTED THAT ON SEPTEMBER 30 A DELEGATION FROM THE SOVIET EMBASSY CALLED UPON MINISTER OF FISHERIES SEETARAM TO REGISTER A PROTEST OVER REPORTS WHICH HAD BEEN APPEARING IN THE PRESS CHARGING RUSSIAN SHIPS WITH "PILLAGING" AROUND THE SAYA DE MALHA BANKS. THE RUSSIAN DIPLOMATS REPORTEDLY SHOWED THE MINISTER A MAP PINPOINTING THE LOCATION OF SOVIET FISHING VESSELS IN THE INDIAN OCEAN. THEY CONTENDED THAT THEIR SHIPS HAD NOT FISHED INSIDE THE MAURITIAN 200 MILE ECONOMIC RESOURCE ZONE, NOR AROUND THE SAYA BANKS.

6. THE WEEKEND OF OCTOBER 1-4 FISHERIES MINISTER SEETARAM, IN THE COMPANY OF THREE OTHER LABOR PARTY PARLIAMENTARIANS, CONDUCTED AN INVESTIGATIVE TOUR OF THE AREA AROUND THE FISHING BANKS IN QUESTION. UPON HIS RETURN, THE MINISTER TOLD THE PRESS THAT HE HAD PROOF THAT "BOATS OF CERTAIN

FOREIGN COUNTRIES" HAD VIOLATED MAURITIAN TERRITORIAL WATERS. HE APPEALED TO THE COUNTRIES INVOLVED TO STOP THE ACTIVITIES NOW. THE MINISTER SAID HE WOULD RECOMMEND INSTALLING A MONITORING OUTPOST ON ST. BRANDON ISLAND TO CONTROL FISHING IN THE AREA. DEPUTY RAZACK PEEROO, WHO WAS ALSO ON THE INVESTIGATING TEAM, WAS LESS SUBTLE. HE CLAIMED THE COMMITTEE HAD "TANGIBLE PROOF" THAT THE FISHERIES HAD BEEN EXPLOITED BY RUSSIAN, KOREAN, AND OTHER COUNTRIES' SHIPS.

7. LE MAURICIEN CLAIMED IN ITS OCTOBER 5 EDITION THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD RECEIVED "IRREFUTABLE PROOF" OF RUSSIAN TRAWLERS FISHING IN MAURITIAN WATERS. THE PROOF WAS IN THE FORM OF PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN RECENTLY BY A FAO OFFICIAL  
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ON BOARD AN OCEANOGRAPHIC VESSEL IN THE SAYA BANKS AREA. THE NEWSPAPER SAID THE PHOTOS WOULD BE STUDIED BY THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS ALONG WITH MINISTER SEETARAM'S REPORT AT THE NEXT CABINET MEETING. THE PAPER SPECULATED THAT AN OFFICIAL PROTEST WOULD SOON BE LODGED WITH THE SOVIET EMBASSY.

8. LE MILITANT, NEWSPAPER OF THE MAURITIAN MILITANT MOVEMENT (MMM), PUBLISHED AN INTERVIEW ON OCTOBER 6 WITH THE SOVIET EMBASSY'S CHARGE' IN WHICH HE SAID, "IN THE NAME OF HIS GOVERNMENT," THAT THE USSR WOULD RECOGNIZE MAURITAIN SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE SAYA BANKS IF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY WERE TO ADOPT A LAW STIPULATING THAT THE BANKS ARE MAURITIAN TERRITORY AS A RESULT OF BEING PART OF MAURITIUS' CONTINENTAL SHELF. THE CHARGE' ALSO DENIED CATEGORICALLY THAT SOVIET SHIPS ARE FISHING AROUND THE SAYA AND THE NAZARETH BANKS. THE MMM NEWSPAPER THEN PROCEEDED TO PROVIDE "PERSONAL TESTIMONIES" OF MAURITIAN SHIP CAPTAINS THAT CONTRADICTED THE SOVIET CLAIM, AND ACCUSED THEM OF DEPLETING THE BANKS OF FISH WITH THE USE OF LARGE TRAWLERS.

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07  
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MCT-01 IGA-02 /144 W

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9. THE MMM'S CENTRAL COMMITTEE MET ON OCTOBER 1 AND DECIDED THAT IN ADDITION TO THE OCTOBER 12 DEMONSTRATION AGAINST PRINCESS ALEXANDRA, THE PARTY WOULD ORGANIZE A "MASSIVE" PUBLIC DEMONSTRATION IN PORT LOUIS ON OCTOBER 19 TO EXPRESS "SOLIDARITY WITH THE LIBERATION MOVEMENTS OF SOUTHERN AFRICA AND TO PROTEST THE ASSASSINATION OF STEVE BIKO BY SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE." THE PARTY WILL DISTRIBUTE LEAFLETS AT THE OCTOBER 19 RALLY "TO SENSITIZE" THE PUBLIC TO THE NEED FOR NATIONALIZING THE PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOL SYSTEMS. THE COMMITTEE ALSO DECIDED TO ORGANIZE A LARGE "NATIONAL CULTURAL FETE" FEATURING MAURITIAN ARTISTS AT THE PLAZA THEATER NEXT DECEMBER 11.

10. AS A PARTY OF THE PARTY'S NATIONWIDE "REVIVAL" CAMPAIGN, THE MMM'S PORT LOUIS BRANCHES HELD MEETINGS ON OCTOBER 2 AND, AMONG OTHER SUBJECTS, VOTED TO ORGANIZE A DEMONSTRATION AGAINST ALL MILITARY PRESENCE IN THE INDIAN OCEAN AND TO LAUNCH A CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE "ELLEGAL OCCUPATION" BY FRANCE OF TROMELIN ISLAND.

11. APPARENTLY NOT TO BE OUTDONE BY THE MMM, THE RADICAL  
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LEFTIST MAURITIAN MILITANT MOVEMENT PROGRESSIVE SOCIALIST PARTY (MMSP) ANNOUNCED THAT IT PLANS TO STAGE A DEMONSTRATION ON OCTOBER 14 AT THE UNIVERSITY DURING THE VISIT OF PRINCESS ALEXANDRA. THE PARTY PROPOSES TO PROTEST THE PRESENCE OF A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE "COLONIALIST" MONARCHY.

12. AS PROMISED LAST WEEK, RESIDENTS OF WATER-POOR SECTIONS OF PORT LOUIS ORGANIZED A STREET DEMONSTRATION ON OCTOBER 5. RIOT POLICE, DISPATCHED TO STOP THE DEMONSTRATORS, DISPERSED THE CROWD, WHICH THEN REGROUPED NEAR THE MINISTRY OF POWER, FUEL AND ENERGY. A DELEGATION, COMPOSED OF

SEVERAL MMM MUNICIPAL REPRESENTATIVES AS WELL AS THE MAYOR OF PORT LOUIS, MET WITH MINISTRY OFFICIALS TO PROTEST THE LACK OF WATER. THE MINISTRY PROMISED TO ALLEVIATE THE PROBLEM BY ASSIGNING TANK TRUCKS TO MAKE DAILY DELIVERIES TO THE AFFECTED AREAS.

13. THE CUSTOMS WORKERS, DUE TO GO ON STRIKE ON OCTOBER 5, DECIDED AT THE LAST MINUTE TO POSTPONE THEIR WORK STOPPAGE UNTIL NEXT WEEK PENDING THE OUTCOME OF A SPECIAL HEARING TO WHICH THE GOVERNMENT HAD AGREED.

14. IN THE COMPANY OF SEVERAL PRINCIPAL LEADERS OF THE MUSLIM ACTION COMMITTEE (CAM), THE PARTY'S CHIEF, SIR ABDUOL RAZACK MOHAMED, DECLARED AT A PRESS CONFERENCE ON OCTOBER 5 THAT THE CAM WOULD BE REORGANIZED AND REVITALIZED. HE SMOOTHED OVER DIFFERENCES WITH DEPUTY REZACK PEEROO WHO HAD JOINED THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE LABOR PARTY FIVE WEEKS AGO. MOHAMED SAID CAM HAD BEEN BEHIND PEEROO'S MOVE AND THAT PEEROO WOULD BE DEFENDING MUSLIM INTERESTS AT THE LABOR PARTY HEADQUARTERS. MOHAMED CAME OUT AGAINST THE REINSTATEMENT OF PARLIAMENTARY BY-ELECTIONS AND IN CONFIDENTIAL

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FAVOR OF A REPUBLICAN FORM OF GOVERNMENT HEADED BY A STRONG, FRENCH-STYLE PRESIDENT.

15. THE PRESS REVEALED THIS WEEK THAT THE INDIAN OCEAN TOURISM ALLIANCE (L"ATOI) WAS FORMALLY DISSOLVED BY ITS PRESIDENT, PRIME MINISTER RAMGOOLAM LAST AUGUST 31. THE ALLIANCE FORMED IN 1966 AMONG MADAGASCAR, REUNION, THE SEYCHELLES, THE COMOROS, AND MAURITIUS, NEVER REALLY FUNCTIONED EFFECTIVELY IN ITS TASK OF JOINTLY PROMOTING TOURISM IN THE AREA. MADAGASCAR WITHDREW SEVERAL YEARS AGO, AND REUNION DID LIKEWISE FOR A PERIOD. THE OTHER MEMBERS SELDOM PAID THEIR DUES, AND CONSEQUENTLY THE SECRETARY GENERAL AND STAFF OF THE ORGANIZATION HAD NO FUNDS WITH WHICH TO OPERATE. ACCORDING TO THE PRESS, THE SYCHELLES INDICATED AFTER THE JUNE 1977 COUP D'ETAT THAT IT WAS NO LONGER INTERESTED IN MAINTAINING ITS MEMBERSHIP. THUS, THE "ALLIANCE" WAS DISSOLVED BY RAMGOOLAM FOR "PRACTICAL AND FINANCIAL REASONS."

16. REGULAR COMMERCIAL AIR SERVICE TO AND FROM MAURITIUS, SOUTH AFRICA, AND AUSTRALIA SUFFERED SOME HEAVY BLOWS DURING THE PAST SEVERAL DAYS. QANTAS AIRLINES LET IT BE KNOWN THAT ITS TEMPORARY SUSPENSION OF FLIGHTS FROM PERTH-MAURITIUS-JOHANNESBURG WILL PROBABLY BECOME PERMANENT. ECONOMIC AND TECHNICAL REASONS WERE THE OFFICIAL REASONS GIVEN FOR THE HALT. ACCORDING TO INDEPENDENT L'EXPRESS, SOUTH AFRICAN AIRWAYS IS PREPARING TO DROP BY MARCH 1978

THE STOPOVER IN MAURITIUS ON ITS PERTH-JOHANNESBURG ROUTE BECAUSE OF A SHIFT TO A LONGER RANGE BOEING 747. (THE LOCAL SOUTH AFRICAN AIRWAYS REPRESENTATIVE LATER SAID HE HAD NO KNOWLEDGE OF THIS CHANGE.) NO OTHER COMPANY CURRENTLY OFFERS FLIGHTS TO AUSTRALIA OR SOUTH AFRICA FROM MAURITIUS. L'EXPRESS ALSO CARRIED EXCEPTS FROM A SOUTH AFRICAN TRAVEL MAGAZINE CRITICAL OF AIR MAURITIUS. THE MAGAZINE'S EDITOR PLACED MUCH OF THE BLAME ON AIR MAURITIUS FOR THE SUSPENSION OF THE QANTAS AND SOUTH AFRICAN FLIGHTS BECAUSE

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THE COMPANY HAS BECOME "TOO GREEDY AND AMBITIOUS" BY NOT GIVING THE TWO SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE AIRLINES MORE FAVORABLE FINANCIAL TREATMENT AT PLAISANCE AIRPORT FOR PERFORMING BADLY NEEDED FLIGHT SERVICES FOR MAURITIANS.

17. UPON HIS RETURN OCTOBER 5 FROM THE GENEVA SUGAR TALKS, MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, SIR SATCAM BOOLELL, EXPRESSED HIS PLEASURE OVER THE NEW ACCORD, STRESSING THAT THE QUOTA OF 150,000 TONS FOR MAURITIUS WAS ENTIRELY SATISFACTORY.

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**Review Markings:**  
Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
22 May 2009  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009